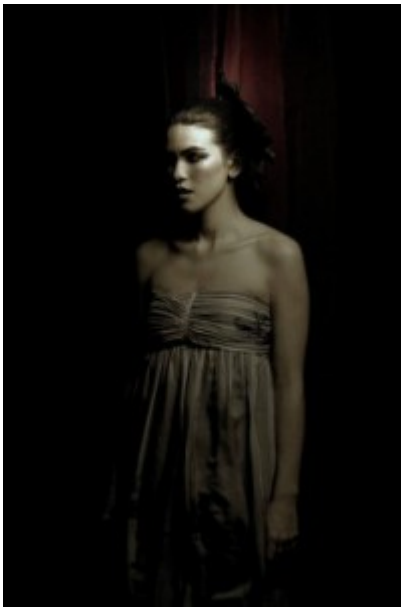


## Music | Bittles' Magazine: The music column from the end of the world

Taking a step into the musical world of Phildel can be like entering a strange and alien land. The artist's hushed atmospheric and emotional resonance immediately induce a sense of awe and wonder in the listener. We aren't in Kansas anymore! Possessed of a rich and powerful voice, her vocals contain a sense of yearning that seems to reach right out of the speakers and caress your very soul. By **JOHN BITTLES**



Her previous album *The Disappearance Of The Girl* was, on first listen, light and ethereal. Yet further plays highlighted the presence of a slow-burning sense of rage. In short, it is an album of startling emotional fragility, a record every music lover should own.

Even if you think you have never heard her music before, you probably have, with Phildel's songs having been used to sound-track adverts for Marks & Spencer, Expedia, Apple and more. A self-taught musician and producer, she started out by practising piano in the music room at school. Since then the artist has taught herself orchestral arrangement among other things, won praise from Trevor Horn, and toured America and Canada.

Taking time out from a busy schedule Phildel took the time to discuss work on the new album, her successful Patreon page, collaborating with the producer Sleepthief, demanding fans, inspiration and lots more.

[It has been more than three years since our last interview. What have you been up to in this time?](#)

Following the release and tour of *The Disappearance of the Girl*, I released a shorter work - the Winter inspired EP called *The Glass Ghost*. I then re-released my instrumental album *Qi*. I was quite creatively, emotionally and physically tired after all of that, so for about 6 months I just stayed in bed and stared at the ceiling whilst I waited for my energy to replenish. I was drained! A little while after that I began writing my second song album. The follow-up to *The Disappearance of the Girl*. It was hard at first because spending time on tour, doing interviews etc promoting the music had taken me away from the writing process. Which, like any muscle, falls out of condition if you stop using it.

So, I'd say it took me a further 6 months of writing to start getting back into the real flow of connecting to my

unconscious and to start achieving the kind of songwriting that the debut album featured. (As a result of that I'm not sure I'll ever dedicate so much time to promoting music again, it just detracts from the actual creation of music too much).

[Last time we spoke you were promoting your album \*The Disappearance Of The Girl\*. Can you tell us a bit about this LP?](#)

The Disappearance of the Girl dealt with a lot of the feelings that stemmed from growing up in an extremely repressive and destructive home. In essence the album symbolised an escape into the world of the imagination, where the sadnesses of reality could be confronted and processed.

[Is there any sign of a follow-up?](#)

Yes, and that follow-up has been written and I'm extremely excited about it. There will be a delay until its release though because whilst the songs have been written and exist as demos, we still need to take it through the production process. This is where we'll spend time discussing the strength of ideas and figuring out if any need enhancing or re-thinking. This part of the process is essential and it tends to take a year. Before this stage even starts I need to secure a number of things to enable it to happen...funding, studio time, waiting for the Producer to become available...

The wait is incredibly frustrating for me and for lots of people hoping for new music. But, it's essential that this is done properly.

[How would you describe your music to those who have never heard you before?](#)

It gets harder to pin down, especially since I write piano-led compositions as well as songs. One thing I think all of my music has in common is that it's emotive, melodic and takes you somewhere else.

[You have recently set up your own Patreon page where people can support your music/art by sponsoring your work. What made you decide to start your own page on this site?](#)

So many reasons...the frustration of waiting for funding and studio time which a full length album needs made me consider whether, whilst I'm doing little waiting in the queue, I should focus on releasing a few single tracks or smaller releases, direct to fans. There are plenty of great songs I've written that for stylistic reasons don't fit on the follow-up album. So, I was thinking it would be great to generate a little funding to complete these and release them to my core fan-base.

[How has the response been so far?](#)

It's been so touching! Normally with Patreon you gain momentum as you release things...so, you wouldn't necessarily expect to have loads of patrons at the start. But I've got 109 patrons contributing over \$1000.00 per Creation before I've created anything. I've decided to make my first Creation an EP, since there's more money there than I'd need for just one song!

[Why should we all become a patron of your work?](#)

It's a fun creative adventure...my Patrons get to choose which demos get made into finished songs, as well as free downloads of those demos. You'll get my new music faster and you'll also get songs and news that will not be available to the public. All for as little as \$1 per Creation. Join us!



In their own way sites like Kickstarter and Patreon are quite empowering for the music fan. Rather than being passive receivers of an artist's new single or LP we can actively be involved in the creative process. I can imagine this could be both rewarding and challenging for the artist involved. How have you found it so far?

It's so rewarding, sometimes as an artist who's become involved in the music industry - you can lose sight of the importance of real, unique creativity. The industry as a whole is quite anxious about unusual music, they're under pressure to generate universal hits particularly as there's so little money left for the industry to survive on. And it's easy to begin to let that insecurity affect your judgement of your own songs. I wrote a song about a woman convicted as a witch who was waiting to be executed, and whilst in my heart I thought the song had real strength. I put it on the shelf because I thought it'd never get past the guardians of the gates of the music industry and never get a budget to be produced. But, when I shared it with my Patrons, it got a fantastic response...so I realised, Patreon is a great way to re-connect with real music enthusiasts and directly bring them music they love, whilst by-passing the insecurities of the commercial music industry.

I also find the feedback from Patrons really helpful. It usually helps me gauge my artistic direction when I'm at a fork in the road of my own thinking. And also tends to re-confirm my beliefs about certain things that are/aren't working in the tracks.

[One of your previous releases which I still listen to a lot today is Qi which features ten hauntingly beautiful piano pieces. Do you have any plans to create/release anything like this again?](#)

Yes, I definitely will. I actually had a few surprising comments from people demanding I stop writing instrumentals and threatening to stop buying my music if I wrote more piano pieces! I find it interesting that people feel this entitlement to your journey as a musician and think it's acceptable to dictate what you should and shouldn't write. That kind of creative repression is exactly what I've fought to escape all my life. People don't have to like everything. If you don't like a release, just step back and don't buy it.

I'll continue as I always have - writing both songs and instrumental pieces. The next album will be a song album. But I've already composed two instrumental pieces which will contribute to the next instrumental album.

[A while ago you released the lovely Dust & Cloud with the producer Sleepthief. How did you find the collaborative process?](#)

It was a first for me to collaborate in this way and I really enjoyed it. I'm used to having the pressure of the whole writing and production process when I work on my own music but with Sleepthief it was far easier as he sent me the instrumental part and I wrote the lyrics and melody over the top. It seemed to fit really well and it

was a really wonderful experience.

[Do you have any further collaborations lined-up?](#)

Nope. To be honest, whilst collaborating is refreshing and enjoyable, working on my own music requires so much of my time and energy I need to really focus in on that alone.

[I first heard your music when I saw you playing live at the Women Of The World festival in London. Are you planning any new shows for 2016?](#)

I'm not sure yet, my management are hoping to help me release an EP in late 2016 in which case there would be some touring (the EP would feature a couple of tracks from the next song album). But, because of the Producer's schedule, and our focus on the album itself, I can't be sure it'll all happen on time.

[With the year 2015 coming to an end, who or what inspired you this year?](#)

The concept of balance inspired me. I realised I need to spend time thinking about things that make me truly happy and doing them more. As ever, my relationships with the people I love and care for in my life right now are also what have inspired me.

[If you could change one thing about the last 12 months what would it be and why?](#)

I wish my friend Marni Portman could still be with us. She passed away having dealt with cancer for years. Her courage and strength throughout her ordeal was inspirational. She was so vital right until the end - joking with me on Skype just a few days before she passed. She taught me so much about life and death and I was utterly moved by her warmth and resilient spirit.

[What would make 2016 the perfect year?](#)

If people in the world could be more compassionate towards themselves and each other - and be more aware of their impact on each other and the environment.

[Do you have any final words for our readers?](#)

Sure, completely off-topic but important - a lot of women avoid cervical cancer screening tests (smear), not realising, you can request to insert the speculum yourself during smear tests if this stage normally causes you pain or discomfort. Women avoiding this screening test is an issue that's been covered by The Guardian and many other publications. My campaign is to make this simple option better known so fewer women dread/miss their smear tests and fewer cases of this cancer go undiagnosed. My nurse now advocates it too.

The Disappearance Of The Girl, Qi and The Glass Ghost EP should be available to purchase in all good download stores. I'm sure your local record shop would be only too happy to order any of these in for you as well. [Full streams and clips of Phildel's songs](#) can be found on Soundcloud while I would strongly recommend a visit to her [Patreon page](#) to find out how you too can get involved.

| [JOHN BITTLES](#)